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Environment Department Issues Final Report on Corrales Airshed Study

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) today released its final Corrales report including its conclusions concerning health risks posed by the Corrales airshed. This study was prompted by a request from Corrales Mayor Gary Kanin received in October 2001, as well as by several requests from local residents.

This environmental health evaluation was conducted in accordance with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) guidelines for health risk assessments. The mission of the project was to work cooperatively with the local and county governments, citizens of Corrales, area industrial complexes and the New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) to identify and analyze potential air quality health risks due to toxic air pollution in the Village of Corrales.

This report, titled "Corrales Environmental Health Evaluation Community Process Summary Report," is the final product of a scientific investigation of the Corrales airshed begun in 2002. It constitutes one of the most comprehensive studies of air toxics related health effects ever completed for any community in the state. In pursuit of this study, a total of approximately \$230,000 was expended including \$141,00 in EPA grants and \$89,000 in Department funds.

The final report states: "Based upon available data, this health risk assessment did not find evidence that any of the modeled or measured chemicals are associated with increased acute or chronic health risks. It must be noted, however, that uncertainties associated with the limited nature of available monitoring and modeling data do exist."

All data collected as a part of this study has been included in the final report. The project involved:

- initial air quality monitoring to help focus the scope of the inventory, identifying potential hot spots and specific air toxics of concern,
- the development of an emissions inventory including air toxics emissions for the area,
- a modeling analysis,
- a refined monitoring study to estimate exposure levels,
- and a toxicological risk characterization considering the monitored and modeled results and dose-response assessment.

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“Now that this five-phase project has been completed, the results are in and the facts are clear,” said NMED Secretary Ron Curry. “This health risk assessment did not find conclusive evidence of any negative health impacts related to poor air quality in the Corrales and Rio Rancho areas. We have worked hard to collect and analyze the best, most scientifically accurate, information available about Corrales’ air. I’d like to thank all the task force members and local citizens for the countless contributions they have made to this process and the many, many hours they have spent in its pursuit.”

Included in the final report are recommendations made by Corrales Air Toxics Task Force members for future actions on the Corrales air issue. NMED will carefully review all recommendations. Given the number of recommendations, it will take some time before NMED will be prepared to respond or take action on these recommendations.

The full Corrales Environmental Health Evaluation Community Process Summary Report is available on the Internet at: <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/aqb/projects/Corrales/index.html>

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